

BOOK REVIEWS

INFECTION IN HOSPITAL – A CODE OF PRACTICE. Edited by G. L. Gibson.
(Pp. x+101. £1.25). Edinburgh and London: Churchill Livingstone, 1971.

This excellent little book should be read by all doctors, nurses and administrators who work in hospital and I am only sorry that it is presented in rather too lavish a format with stiff covers so that it is both too large and too heavy to carry in the pocket. It contains all those details which need to be known about preventing and dealing with infection in hospital which cannot be found easily in a textbook. It is the sort of information which should appear in the 'Hospital Handbook' which is issued to new house officers and which usually only contains normal biochemical values and details of how to do complex investigations. This book tells you how to deal with a case of typhoid, what antiseptics are to be used for cleaning lavatory seats and how to test a new autoclave. It contains an outline policy for the use of antiseptics and antibiotics in the hospital environment without building up any risk of virulent 'hospital' infections. What is most important is that the information is up to date and is applicable to current hospital conditions and not to some Utopia where all patients are in single isolable wards with their own toilet facilities and there is an ambulance of bacteriologically pure nurses.

The contents are brief, concise and dogmatic; most readers will disagree with a sentence or two here and there but few will disagree with the whole. It will need revision as hospital facilities improve and new antiseptics, antibiotics and methods of sterilisation become available. But the revision will only affect the detail: the principles behind this book have been tried and proved effective in hospital practice over the last 10-15 years. It is a fitting memorial for Dr. George Gibson's period of work as bacteriologist to the Belfast Group of Hospitals.
P.C.E.

DISEASES OF THE NERVOUS SYSTEM. Described for Practitioners and Students by Sir Francis Walshe. Eleventh Edition. (Pp. xv+381; figs. 63, £3.00).
Edinburgh and London: E. and S. Livingstone, 1970.

This is a book that gives great pleasure and at the same time dispenses accurate instruction in clinical neurology painlessly. Many are the facets of the genius of Sir Francis Walshe: his early contributions to the understanding of decerebrate rigidity in man, his philosophical championing of the predominance of the human cortex over the brain-stem, and his penetrating humour, wit and eloquence. This text book brings out his excellence as a teacher, and is an expression of his characteristic clarity of exposition. It is somehow less demanding of the reader than other standard text books, yet little that is new is omitted although some topics are selected for more, and some for less, prominence, as is the prerogative of an author. Much has changed, even in neurological thinking during the thirty years since the first edition appeared. Now in its eleventh edition and with two chapters on liver-brain relationships and lead poisoning by Dr. John Walshe it will remain a favourite for all medical practitioners and is to be highly recommended as essential reading for membership and other diploma candidates. Medical students and junior hospital staff will never regret being introduced to the intricacies of nervous system diseases through studying Walshe. All will be captured by the clear and vigorous writing. It is, veritably, a book on diseases of the nervous system described by a master in the science, art and philosophy of neurology.

L.J.H.

UROLOGY AND RENAL MEDICINE by J. E. Newsam and J. J. B. Petrie.
(Pp. 259; figs. 72. £1.25). London and Edinburgh: Livingstone, 1971.

This excellent little book is intended primarily for undergraduates, but it deserves to be widely read. Although pocket-sized it contains a great amount of information, which is clearly and concisely presented. Indeed the information it contains should be sufficient for the majority of doctors not actually engaged in urology, nephrology, or closely related specialities.
M.G.McG.